WOMEN FINALLY ON THE SHORES OF ISLAM

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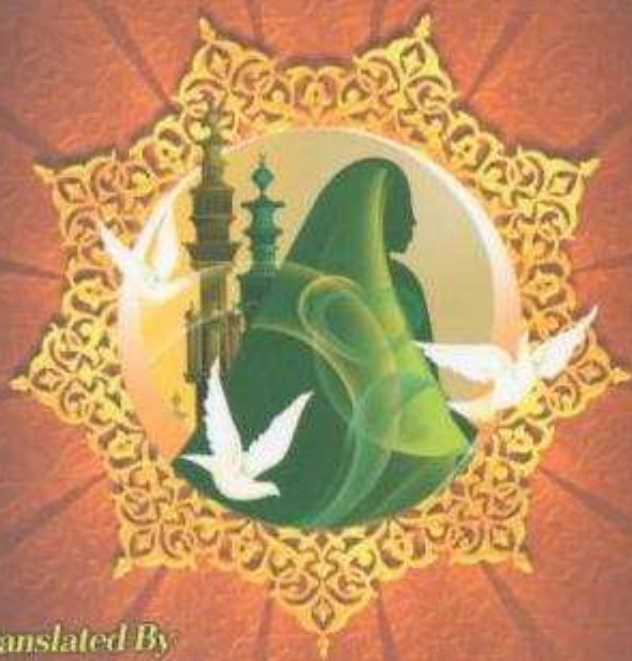
محمد رشيد العويد

Translated By
Noha Kamal El-Din

Dar Al-Manarah

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By: *Muhammad Rasheed Al-`Uwayyed*

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For Translation, Publishing & Distribution

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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Editor's Preface

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an: ***"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a Watcher over you."*** (An-Nisaa': 1)

This Qur'anic verse is from the *Surah* (chapter), "Women", which should make all those who accuse Islam of denying women their rights know that there is a chapter in the book of Muslims which shows that they are held in high esteem. Thus, I challenge everyone to bring forth any religious book or law written fourteen thousand years ago, which gave women the same rights as those mentioned in this chapter, and the rest of the Qur'an.

When I was first asked to write the editor's note on the translation of this book, I thought it was an opportunity for me to send a message to those who think that Islam suppresses women. But on second thoughts, I felt that the words should come from the horse's mouth.

The reader will therefore learn for himself or herself what these women who embraced Islam have to say. Nearly all of them are well educated, and became Muslims during their search for the truth. The translator (herself a woman) did a good job in rendering this book, which I hope will give a true picture of Islam to non-Muslim, and help rid Muslim women of the inferiority complex which the materialistic and so-called advanced world has made them to feel.

The new converts have discussed issues which non-Muslim women and Muslim women who suffer from inferiority complex think lower their status. For example, the "*Hijaab*" (veil) is considered by those who misunderstand Islam to be something that makes women hide their beauty. But people must not forget that in those days when Christianity was taken very seriously in Europe and other parts of the world, it was unbecoming for a woman to leave her house without a scarf or to wear a short dress with short sleeves.

Because of the respect women are accorded in Islam, they are not used as "human advertising products", and material for pornography. Their beauty is supposed to be seen and enjoyed only by their husbands who are given this right, through the institution of marriage.

In everyday life, we know that the more expensive and valuable something is, the more the care, attention and protection accorded it. This is

the case with things made of gold, diamond, pearl etc. This rule, therefore, applies to women, because human beings are the best of Allah's creatures. Thus, *Hijaab* is meant to preserve the "value" which women deserve.

People who read this book must be warned against a certain misconception, i.e. linking Islam with the deeds of some so-called Muslims. This should not be criterion for proving the excellence of any religion or creed. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was sent by Allah to be a source of mercy to the world. So, wherever a Muslim may be, if he practices Islam accordingly, then he is the real Muslim, even if he is not in a Muslim country.

Also, it is also worth learning that there is no religious hierarchy in Islam. The Imam who leads Muslims in congregational prayers cannot claim to be the most pious Muslim, except if he puts his knowledge into practice. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once said to his daughter, Fatimah: *"Do good deeds for I will not, by my own power, intercede (with Allah) on behalf of you on the Day of Judgement."*

Another thing that will catch the reader's attention is that anybody who embraces Islam feels straightaway that he or she is duty bound to propagate this religion, and also tries to learn the language of the Qur'an, Arabic.

One may ask that if we say the neglect of some Muslims of religious teachings is not the basis of judging the veracity of the message of Islam, what then are the criteria? The first of these is the Glorious book of Muslims, the Qur'an, which the British Muslim Marmduke Pickthall described as "that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy" "No one who is religious and reads the Qur'an with an open heart and without prejudice, can stop himself or herself from embracing Islam."

The second criterion for judging the excellence of Islam as a religion is the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, the unlettered Prophet who, during a period of twenty three years, was able to deliver the people of Arabia from darkness to light. He made those desert people move from the state of oblivion they lived in, to one of self-confidence, and through the strength of their faith, ruled the world. Well-advanced nations became Islamic strongholds after the death of Prophet Muhammad, during the eras of the rightly-guided Caliphs, and later periods. For example, countries like Egypt, Persia (now Iran), Syria, Iraq, etc., came under the Islamic rule and have remained as Islamic states up to this day.

Islam is a simple religion, a fact buttressed by the Prophetic Saying: *"Make things easy for people, and do not make them difficult."* Once the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was angry when

one of his companions said that he did not pray in the mosque because the Imam spent a long time in the prayer. He spoke to that Imam angrily and warned him that he should make his prayer short, as there might be old people, the weak, and those who have work to do, in the congregation. Therefore, there are no rites for one who wants to embrace Islam. He or she only has to say, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

May the light of Islam which always penetrates any soul searching for the truth, shine on the souls of those men and women who read this book. May Allah make them be part of the Universal Islamic nation which has no geographical boundaries, and whose citizens are not distinguished by color or class. Allah Almighty says in the Glorious Qur'an: ***"The most honored of you in the Sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you."***

Muhammad Ibrahim Kamarah

Translator's Foreword

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

At a time when the entire human race was striving strenuously to survive amidst a dark sea of ignorance and lawlessness, Allah, Exalted be He, had mercy on His servants and helped them to land on the safe shore of dignity and bliss by revealing unto Prophet Muhammad, His Sealing Message, Islam. Under Islam, Muslim women retrieved their long lost dignity and were endowed with their full rights, which, as a result, enabled them to soar to previously undreamed of horizons of freedom and respect.

Fourteen centuries later, which was long enough for the non-Muslim world to make enormous strides and to arrive at a highly glamorous civilisation coupled with overwhelming and advanced technology, non-Muslim women sank to the bottom of a deep dark well where they, amazingly enough, were under the false impression that they lead a liberated life that enabled them to rise in the world independently of men and to even act as rivals to them.

However, in spite of the false sheen of the present-day civilisation, women in non-Muslim societies are made to bear the yoke of a rigorous system imposed by men whereby the former are

made to toil incessantly in order to win their own living. They are also forced to spend the largest portion of the day outside their houses and away from their children if they are to build themselves a career. Additionally, and worst of all, they are still held in contempt by society let alone by their own husbands, as they are regarded as mere objects of cheap animalistic pleasures.

It is only natural, therefore, for non-Muslim women to scream out for help and to bend over backwards attempting to find a way out of their dilemma. Since drastic diseases call for drastic remedies, it did not take non-Muslim women long to realise that all of their problems and suffering boil down to a question of faith. The Western world, which has grown exclusively materialistic, has paid, if at all, very little attention to religion. Consequently, moral degeneration and the dehumanization of relationships in non-Muslim societies as well as all the ills and aspects of decadence in Western society can be directly traced to lack of one sound true faith whereby man can forge a relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Suffering in a cruel ruthless world that can only offer sham temporary pleasure but cannot possibly promise lasting content, non-Muslim women realised that the key to a happy life in this world and the Hereafter lies in Islam. Thereupon they did not think twice before they embraced Islam.

Going through the book, the reader would surely come to sense the overwhelming joy and bliss these women experienced upon converting to Islam. Though many of them assert that words cannot do justice to the felicity and happiness they feel in their hearts, one can almost hear their voices as they cry out with joy. They further explain the reasons why they, willingly, with no coercion and away from any pressure, chose to convert to Islam. Reasons they cite are varied. Some could not bring themselves to accept the idea of the Trinity and found that the oneness of Allah, Exalted be He, agrees with man's sound mind and true human nature. Another group of women loathed the life of recklessness and unrestrained freedom, on account of which human society degenerated into a jungle where man would not stop to think twice before he would grab hold of whatever he covets. Conversely, they found in Islam a long-sought haven where Muslims display laudable benevolence, love and care for one another and refrain from all evils and vice generally held in the West as part of modern civilisation. Under Islam, human bonds are again infused with warmth and affection which, in turn, elevates the Islamic human society to a status far above that of non-Muslim societies. A third group of women admired the way Islam would have a husband treat his wife, support and cherish her, which stands in stark contrast to the humiliation and ill-treatment of many non-Muslim husbands to their wives.

These women came to realise the true meaning of the slogans of women liberation movements, all of which are manifested in Islam which grants women their full rights and puts them on equal footing with man, making the latter complementary partners rather than antagonistic rivals in society.

Furthermore, throughout the book, newly-converted Muslims refute some of the false allegations often hurled at Islam, and attempt to correct some of the widespread misconceptions about it. They explain the fact that wearing the veil (*Hijaab*), as stipulated in the Glorious Qur'an, does not in the least, hinder women or impair their beauty and femininity. Rather it is for their own advantage, for it protects them against hungry malicious eyes and prevents them from being cheap items on the markets. Moreover, they assert that it is by no means true that people only convert to Islam in times of distress or because they happen to suffer from extreme property or other social crises. They point out that Islam is the religion of truth, in the sense that if man is left to listen to his sound human nature, that is not perverted by animal lusts and desires and not blinded by the false glamour of modern civilisation, he is bound to make it to the right path, i.e. to Islam.

I am personally of the view that the best advantage this book enjoys over most other books dealing with Islam or attempting to introduce it to

non-Muslim societies is that it does not fling attacks and raids at other creeds and religions, nor does it seek to disfigure them as is often done on the part of Muslims who undoubtedly mean well. Rather, the book quotes women who were born and brought up amidst a tumultuous sea of violence, crime and moral looseness, and who have long been confused and perplexed living in a society where man has come so close to believing he is in full control of his universe and that sticking to religion is a waste of time, if not a sign of backwardness and primitiveness. The forte of the book, therefore, lies in the fact that these new converts, out of their own free will, chose to discard a sham civilisation and to seek refuge in Islam whereby they stand to gain genuine bliss in this world and everlasting joy in the Hereafter.

Since rendering the original book in English has personally given me much joy, I sincerely hope it can prove of some use to non-Muslim women who have heard about Islam but still have their own doubts and skeptics. The book may also answer the questions of Westerners who are puzzled at women that chose to embrace Islam and acquire a whole new identity. In addition to that, I also hope that the book would sound bells of alarm to Muslim women who got derailed off the right track and were blinded by the false sheen of Western civilisation. In conclusion, the book is a brief account of the victory of truth, as undertaken by

women whose hearts and souls yearned for it. However, the world still abounds in people who thirst for the truth and desperately need us, Muslims, to reach out and salvage them.

Note:

The translator wishes to kindly draw readers attention to the fact that the original book is a compilation of articles, collected from numerous sources and rendered into Arabic. It is noteworthy to point that no effort has been spared in checking the spelling of names. However, owing to the fact that the names in English were not included in the original book, and because we had to deal with names of various nationalities, some of which were difficult to check, we were left with no choice but to transliterate names we failed at arriving at their original spelling.

Abbreviations Used:

AC: after Christ
AH: after Hijrah

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Author's Introduction

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad, his kith and kin and his Companions as well as those who have followed his guidance till the Day of Judgment.

As I read the words of women who embraced Islam, I could not help but wish that they would be read by women who were born Muslims, spoke the Arabic language and faced no obstacles to hinder them from fully abiding by Islam which they have so sadly forsaken. It is distressing to see how they have failed to commit themselves to its injunctions as was done by Western women who were born in non-Muslim environments and were ignorant of the language in which its Glorious Book was revealed. Nonetheless, they managed, with the Help and Guidance of Allah, to find their way to Islam wherein they have found bliss, comfort and satisfaction.

I sincerely wish that our young girls and women would read this book and come to sense the joy and enormous content the words of the new converts unveil. This may call to their attention the grandeur of Islam, as well as the comfort, reassurance, content and happiness it brings one

in this world and in the Hereafter, all of which are the happy and sure consequences of embracing Islam. I therefore started a new regular section in *An-Noor* magazine entitled "A Muslim Woman Said" wherein I published excerpts I selected from the words of newly-converted Muslims, all of which abounded in highly expressive and exceedingly significant meanings.

After three years of regularly publishing these excerpts, I thought it would prove far more beneficial to compile them in one volume which, when read by a Muslim woman who abides by Islam, would cause her to grow more content and reassured that she is, beyond a shred of doubt, on the right path. Conversely, I am certain that if a Muslim woman who does not bind herself to the behests of Islam happens to read the book, she will realise the danger and the enormity of the mistake she has committed, which, in turn, would bring her to seek the right track again, and to return to Islam with her heart soaked in regret, yet repenting of its sin.

Muhammad Rasheed Al-`Uwayyed
1999 AC/1420 AH

I Look More Beautiful Wearing the Veil

- I look far more beautiful now that I have worn the veil (*Hijaab*). It shields me against men's devouring eyes.

Catherine, Huda after embracing Islam

- To the eyes of the faithful, the world is an open book that abounds in highly eloquent meanings.

British Mariam Webeld
after embracing Islam

- I bask in enormous content and reassurance. Praise and thanks be to Allah for guiding me to Islam.

German Salmah

- I wore the veil immediately upon converting to Islam in compliance with the explicit command in the Glorious Qur'an.

German Khadeejah

- Having converted to Islam, I insisted upon wearing a full veil, head to toe.

from Western Women's Motives
For Embracing Islam by H. Paul

- My life truly began after accepting Islam; my whole previous life was absolutely valueless.

Philippine Imaan

- In tears, I came to learn a lot, beams of faith shone brightly down on my heart and I was

overcome by some inexplicable feeling that I have never experienced before.

Danish Mariam

- I do not wish to talk, for words cannot express my overwhelming happiness for converting to Islam. Voluminous books will not even be sufficient to do justice to the enormity of my joy. I am a Muslim, a Muslim, a Muslim. Tell the whole world I am a Muslim to whom embracing Islam has given bliss and joy. Say it out loud: Greek Theresa has become Khadeejah in creed, outfit, behavior and mentality.

Greek Teresa, Khadeejah after converting to Islam

- Nothing in Islam has made me happier than men's support and protection of women. I take pleasure as well as pride in it; I am a woman with a man to take care of me. Together we live a calm tranquil life. I simply cannot believe that I no longer have to earn my own living, that I no longer have to squabble with vendors in markets, nor to have to deal with the ups and downs of life. There is a man here, to defend and protect me. Confident in his strength, I can face the world, and armed with Islam, we can both defy it.

Danish Mu'menah

- The veil is a woman's ticket to liberty.
- The veil gives me more protection.

A British Muslim

- The veil is a public declaration of commitment.

A British Muslim

- The veil is part of me, part of who I am. I took the veil before embracing Islam as I was convinced that I was actually respecting myself in doing so. I never publicly showed off my body and physical attractions. I was always searching for a good life. Of course, the veil I used to wear before embracing Islam was nothing like the veil I have worn now. After Allah guided me to Islam, I have adopted full typical veil, as to color and cloth, covering my face, hands and feet. Praise and thanks are due to Allah for all that.

German Mu'menah

Islam is Life Itself

- When my parents gave up hope that I would be cured, I had to hospitalize in public and private hospitals, and I vowed that I would embrace Islam if ever I was cured and released out of hospital.

- Even before converting to Islam, I came to realise that creed, by and large, in our contemporary world is faced with enormous jeopardy embodied in the so-called renovation movement that targets demolishing the dictates of religion with the aid of man-made philosophies.

- In his first letter to me, dating January 1961, His Eminence Abul-A'la Al-Mawdudi wrote, "Reviewing your articles, I got the distinct feeling that you were reading my mind. I hope you could say the same thing if ever you got the chance to pick up Urdu and read my writings".

- After converting to Islam in 1961, I used to sit spellbound for hours listening to a recitation of the Glorious Qur'an by the famous `Abdel Baaset in a mosque in New York.

- I spotted a guest among praying people. I looked at him only to find a skinny black young man who was shabbily dressed. He introduced himself as a student from Zanzibar. The moment the young man commenced reciting the Glorious

Qur'an, I realised that I have never heard a more enhancing recitation. He even outdid `Abdel Baaset himself! This mysterious young man who was granted a golden voice made me think: Bilaal, may Allah be pleased with him, must have had such a marvelous voice.

- I gradually came to realise that it was Islam that elevated the Arabs from being mere barbarous desert tribes and turned them into masters of the worlds. I have never thought of reading the Glorious Qur'an myself until I grew impatient to know how such a drastic change came about and what its causes were.

- My idea of the Qur'an used to be very flimsy, until one day I came across a translation of the meaning of the Qur'an by Muhammad Pickthall, a Muslim Englishman. The moment I opened the book, I was overcome by a feeling that this is heavenly inspiration. His style is simply spellbinding.

- Most of the translations of the meaning of the Qur'an mistakenly use the word (God) to refer to the Divine Entity. Pickthall, conversely, employs (Allah) all throughout his translation, which, in turn, is of an enormous impact on the Western reader.

- Hardships of life taught me that indulging oneself in lusts and pleasures will only lead one to misery.

- All my life I have tended to be serious and have detested playfulness and perversity, the two most characteristic features of our contemporary civilised world.

- I found the dictates of the Qur'an and the Sayings of the Prophet (*Hadiths*) to be in full harmony with my nature. I learned from the Qur'an that Islam is not just another hobby, nor an additional aspect of life. Islam is actually life itself.

American Muslim Mariam Jameelah

How Wonderful this Life Is!

- After matriculation, I happened to come in contact with some Muslims. I had not read or heard anything about Islam before. As a matter of fact, like most Westerners, I used to hold a grudge against and entertain suspicions concerning Islam. Calmly and through gentle admonition, Muslim students at University explained to me the principles of their religion, and requited all my doubts. They also gave me a few books to read. I used to browse through them rapidly and at my leisure, considering it to be merely a distraction. A true drastic change took place once I started reading paragraphs of these books. Those doubts I had in mind concerning Islam were gradually dispersed. I fell to reading them in depth. I was captivated by their style as well as methods of explanation and commentary. I was, in every sense, impressed by the logic they followed in expounding properties of the Creator and the creature as well as describing life after death. Next those Muslim students gave me an English translation of the meaning of the Qur'an. Words cannot possibly describe the depth of the impact the Qur'an left on me. I had barely finished reading the third chapter of the Qur'an when I unconsciously prostrated myself before the Creator of the universe. That was my first time to pray in

Islam. Since then, I have become a Muslim; praise and thanks be to Allah.

- I am often asked about the main motives that led me to convert to Islam. I always reply that it is not easy to offer some satisfying answer to such a question. Like all European Muslims, I think of Islam as some marvelous whole geometric pattern, wherein each part integrates with all the other parts. The secret of its beauty, therefore, lies in the harmony of its constituent parts. This particular attribute of Islam is of some deep impact on the human nature. It is absolutely amazing to contemplate the thorough Islamic concepts of life in the general sense of the word, as well as of man's aims, motives and code of behavior.

- Examining the details and principles of Islam, one finds in them the best of all guides towards an impeccable social life based on sound ethical values. For instance, a Muslim mentions the Name of Allah at the outset of everything he does, thus linking his religion to his everyday life, which, in turn, results in a balanced and harmonised life.

- The smooth harmony that Islam brings between man's physical and spiritual needs can be of a significant effect nowadays. It can show Western civilisation the way to real prosperity and salvation.

- Before seeking to spread Islam, we should first lead a life that can rise up to the level of our sublime religion.
- A book can prove to be far more efficient than a discussion or a debate can possibly be. Unfortunately, books dealing with Islam in English are very few.
- I wish to assert the importance of good examples. We all have to be living examples in abiding by the ordinances of Islam.
- I have come to notice that Muslim young people admire the valueless accomplishments of Western civilisation to the point of being wholly blinded by its false glamour.
- I'd like to express my deepest admiration for the strong family ties and the sound social life that Muslims enjoy. How wonderful this life is!

British -Muslim, `Aa'ishah Berget Honi

The Material Western Society Will Never Come to Know Anything Like It

- Islam constituted a real upheaval in my life. It freed me from diehard despair, constant complaining and an insurmountable sense of giving in, all of which were consequences of the materialism that dominates Western societies.
- When I embraced Islam at the age of twenty, I felt that my life suddenly became whole and worthwhile.
- We should make sure never to adopt a complacent attitude that blinds us to our own defects and points of weakness. Conversely, we should have a scrutinizing critical eye regarding our community and ourselves.
- Islam is a dynamic religion that can, with Allah's Aid, coupled with Muslims' ceaseless efforts, liberate man from the powers of demolition and lead him to progress and prosperity.
- Eloquence and lucidity cannot, on their own, bring about a change for the better.
- It is the duty of well-educated and cultured Muslims to explain that Islam is the new starting point for the entire human race.

- A Muslim's personal behavior that conforms to Islam is the best way to introduce the virtues and the sound system of Islam, to humanity in its entirety.
- I find the idea of Islam as a global religion quite appealing. It is the kind of religion that unites all religions and creeds under the umbrella of a unique system.
- There exists real brotherhood among Muslims that the material Western society has never known anything like, nor will it ever achieve in the future. The vacuous slogans, like communism, can never offer anything even remotely close to it.
- Islam enables one to fulfil both his or her material and spiritual needs in such a balanced manner as to ensure the development of a creative cultured mentality.
- An ethical, straightforward life offers one peace of mind and spiritual progress.
- We have to always remember what Allah has promised us when He, Exalted be He, said, ***"And those who strive in Our (Cause) - We will certainly guide them to Our Paths: for verily Allah is with those who do right."*** (Al-`Ankaboot: 69) Allah the Magnificent speaks the truth.

Austrian Jameelah Qarar
after embracing Islam

I Feel Tenderness in My Heart that I Never Experienced before Embracing Islam

- I enjoy peace and serenity both in my mind and in my heart having converted to Islam.
- I got sick of the religions that treat personal behavior and places of worship as two separate things. These very religions are lax when it comes to principal values; for instance, they would not hesitate to use mixed swimming pools and wayward dance halls as a link between them and reckless youth.
- I have realised that Islam is so comprehensive to the point that it regards all the earth as a mosque and every good deed as an act of worship, as long as the believer seeks Allah's Pleasure in doing it. Therefore, a true Muslim is himself a sound image of Islam. This undoubtedly gives him joy, as he suffers no contradiction between himself and the laws of nature inside and around him. On the contrary, he feels he is in full harmony with life, and that any deviation from the injunctions of this religion will only lead to his misery, as he thus will have clashed with the prime principles of life itself.
- I think of Islam as Allah's Call that goes in line with the depth of the human nature. I insist on

subjecting all my actions to the rules of Islam.

- Now that I have come to learn a lot about Islam, I feel like I have discovered myself, my true identity all over again. I feel like I am finally on the right track. How can I not submit myself totally to Islam that has salvaged me from this dilemma and guided me after I had been sadly lost!

- The five daily prayers offer me happy occasions to quench my thirst for entreating Allah. I will undoubtedly find fasting to be an enormous source of joy. I have come to loathe the lusts that had previously caused me to suffer more and more spiritual emptiness. Besides, I did expect people's mockery and I trained myself to bear it all.

- Women regained their dignity as human beings in Islam. For centuries, clergymen held women on an equal footing with the devil, until the gentle breeze of Islamic civilisation blew over Europe via Andalusia, as well as the Crusades. Only then did clergymen begin to reconsider their views of women. They kept modifying their views till they have eventually come to approve some of women's rights, which Islam had already granted them fourteen centuries ago.

- I feel some tenderness in my heart that I never experienced before embracing Islam. I am often overcome by this feeling to the point that I

become totally oblivious of anything else, except those heavenly signs that I keep discovering in the Glorious Qur'an and the Prophets' Sayings (*Hadith*) by the day.

- I have decided to retrench and to dedicate the part of my income that I could spare for the call to Islam and for the purpose of helping Albanian Muslim refugees. I also intend to receive and baby-sit working mothers' children in my house.

French Muslim Paulette Gyu,
Huda after embracing Islam

Islam is the Religion of Progress

- When I first learned of Islam, I felt like some cold dry earth that was swept over by a warm river after a dreary winter. It breathed warmth into my soul and cloaked me with invaluable teachings. How clear those teachings are, how lucid and how logic!

- "There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is Messenger of Allah." Is there are anything more sublime or refined than this? A closer look at it reveals the fact that it is absolutely clear of any trace of the obscure Western cults, such as those that believe in the Trinity and fall short of satisfying an intelligent broad mind.

- I felt that Islam is the religion I have always awaited, the religion I have always believed in. In publicly declaring my conversion to Islam, I was only acting in accordance with the dictates of my conscience. Can anything ever be more cogent than the creed of Islam?

- I will undoubtedly be reprimanded by my family, relatives and friends. Yet, I am positive that I will be able to disperse whatever doubts there may be in their minds concerning Islam. These doubts are being taught to people here in Germany. People's minds probably abound in these disturbing misconceptions.

- Islam goes in line with the sound human nature.
- At the time when the teachings and principles of other religions fell apart before the hegemony of science, scientists all over the world sought refuge in Islam as its teachings are closer to science than those of any other religion. As a matter of fact, Islam urges on people the importance of seeking knowledge.
- Islam is a progressive religion that is fit for all countries and all ages.
- Islam is a dynamic bustling religion. It is the duty of all cultured Muslims to quench our spiritual thirst with Islam. This is the most important duty the whole Muslim world has to shoulder.
- Islam has a message that must reach the entire globe. Islam is a ray of light that beams down on the whole world. Let everyone of us, who can serve the cause of the call to Islam, introduce this religion to his or her family first, then to all people.
- The idea of killing Christ, peace be upon him, to redeem people always seemed unreasonable to me. To put it mildly, Christianity has always been a baffling puzzle to me, which is why I deserted the church long time ago.

German Muslim Faṯimah Sillamir

I Have Always Felt I Am a Muslim

- I was truly amazed when I found Islam to be a serene religion that urges for the devoted worship of Allah alone and lays down a comprehensive practical system to be followed by everyone.
- In Islam, the basic principles of the true religion are wholly and amazingly preserved intact and safe from all attempts of change or interpolation that other religions were subject to.
- Islam ordains believing in all of Allah's Prophets. Islam does not claim to be a rival to any of the previous religions. It simply states and asserts the essence of the guiding creed that all previous Prophets introduced to their people.
- The teachings of Islam are positive and realistic. They do not seek to create an illusionary conflict between man's body and soul nor do they adopt an antagonistic attitude towards people's everyday life.
- Islam regards life, in all its aspects, as an opportunity to worship Allah and to devotedly resort to Him, Exalted be He. This is an opportunity made equally available to everyone without the least intervention or meddling of some despotic arrogant clergyman.

- I have always felt I am Muslim, or at least I have started to, ever since I came to believe that all of Allah's great Prophets preached the same heavenly message.
- I was certain, beyond any shred of doubt, that Islam preserved Allah's final message to humanity in its true pristine version.
- It is sometimes observed that Muslim young people have been so enchanted by Western materialistic progress that they admire and imitate all that is Western even to the point of sacrificing Islam in their conquest of atheist materialism.
- If the West was able to outstrip the East as to inventions and technology, Islam is not to blame. This is due to Muslims' inability to put Islamic teachings in force. It seems to me that there is a unique opportunity now for the Muslim world to prosper, to take the helm of the world both on the ethical and cultural arenas and to carry the banner of progress anew.

Muslim Francis Streene

Islam Taught Me How to Deal with People

- What mainly caught my attention in Muslim youth, young as they were, was their high degree of awareness, despite their being away from their home. I sensed their spirit of struggle that drove them to leave their homelands and families in pursuit of knowledge and learning in some foreign country. I, therefore, grew scientifically and spiritually curious about their religion.

- I have always wanted to befriend that sensible Muslim young man, who is now my husband, and I did express to him my wish in so many words. However, he refused to start a relationship with me explaining that the only permissible relation between man and woman in Islam is through marriage. So I agreed to marry him because I admired him and his way of thinking.

- My family was against the idea from the onset, and they refused to attend our wedding. In the course of time, and because my husband has always treated them well, they have grown so close now.

- I had to quit my job at university because the veil I wore was absolutely unacceptable to them.

- I am so pleased to have chosen to work for the cause of the call and guidance to Islam.
- Three years ago, I have started to gather Muslim girls, especially Turkish girls, to help them with their studies throughout all educational stages so that they would be able to sit for official German government exams, which, in turn, will enable them, to pursue their studies in college. I am currently working on establishing an international Islamic primary school for educating Muslim girls.
- To all Muslim women, I say, we must all act in conformity with Islam and closely abide by its commandments.
- It is really disquieting to have such wide-scale strife among Muslims all across the world, beginning with Germany through the Arab states. Why this strife? Why this hatred? There are countless parties and Islamic groups, each and every one of them is complacent.
- It is so sad what Muslims in general have come to all over the world. They are supposed to be committed to their religion, and to be more dynamic in work, i.e. they should set an example for people all over the globe. Real Muslims are unfortunately numbered these days.

German Muslim Ereca Toisson,
Aaminah after embracing
Islam, from an interview by
***Ash-Shaqa'iq*, a Lebanese magazine**

I Simply Adore the Qur'an

- The rules and principles of the Glorious Qur'an never change as the latter was revealed by Allah, Exalted be He, so that the world would follow the Divine law till the Day of Reckoning.
- I believe that whoever pledges allegiance to people who call to Islam actually sacrifices himself, his money and all he owns. Besides, what does man actually own in this world? Man merely owns ephemeral possessions which, if offered to Allah, Exalted be He, will last eternally. If, conversely, he expends them in this life, they will be wasted.
- When one offers his soul to Allah, one actually preserves it; when one offers his money in the cause of Allah, one actually preserves it; and when one offers all his worldly possessions also for the sake of Allah, one actually preserves them.
- I have never forgotten Saudi King `Abdul Azeez's writing to his son, Su`ood, on my first pilgrimage saying, "Among the pilgrims this year is a 20-year-old girl called Miss Zaynab Al-Ghazali. She started the first Islamic call addressing Muslim women with a view to bringing them back to the way the venerable ancestral women used to be.

- I have been to Pakistan more than seven times. From there, I used to head for Afghanistan to live among the *Mujahideen* (fighters in the cause of Islam) in their trenches. I used to stop at the capital, Kabul, then head for Peshawar where I would stay for about six days during which I would visit the *Mujahideen* in the battlefield. Those were the good old days in the history of the Muslim world; the days of *Jihad* (striving in the cause of Allah). Presently, on the other hand, the *Mujahideen* have regressed and split into warring sects and factions.

- Late Pakistani President Diaa' Al-Haq wished to put the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) into force, to implement the sublime Glorious Qur'an and the lofty Prophetic Tradition. His goal was for Muslims to be a nation that fully conforms to the *Shari'ah*, and as a result he died a martyr.

- I love the Qur'an, I simply adore it. A lover speaks to his or her loved one, spends time with his loved one, and embraces his loved one. I have embraced the Qur'an and loved it. I quote the Qur'an and speak about it before the masses of Muslim men and women. For more than sixty years, I have been speaking of the Qur'an in mosques, that is since the beginning of the call I started in mosques in 1937. The Qur'an is my one and only book, with all the richness and depth that interpreters find in it.

Zaynab Al-Ghazali *Al-Anbaa'*,
a Kuwaiti newspaper

Islam Answered All My Questions

- I found Islam to be the only religion that provides a radical solution to all my problems.
- It is the only religion that regards women as human beings, fully acknowledges her dignity, respects them and grants them all their rights.
- I have learned that Islam ordains that women should be treated well. The Prophet's dying words were: "Act kindly towards women."
- I was captivated by what Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said about women, "*Only a gracious person would treat women kindly, and only a mean person would abuse them.*" So I immediately set about looking for a way to embrace this religion.
- I converted to Islam to regain my dignity and my humanity.

An Indian stewardess who embraced Islam in Kuwait

- Islam answered all the questions I had in mind.
- Students in the United States throughout all the stages of education (elementary through high school) are taught that Islam is a backward primitive religion that was spread by force, and that it was proclaimed by a rich merchant.

Whole generations in the US were fed a line about Islam.

- My friends began to ask serious questions about the nature of Islam, unlike their previous questions that were mere out of mockery and scoffs.

- I was so intrigued by the Arabic language to the point that I switched my field of study at university from medicine to the Arabic language. I have got an MA degree in Arabic, which I currently teach to students at the very university where I studied.

- I grew more and more convinced of Islam, thanks to the growing number of Muslims. Some of them are outstanding practical examples of what a real Muslim should be like. They played a significant role in bolstering my faith.

`Aliyaa' Sterling, Sandra before embracing Islam

- I have decided to embrace Islam as a result of my scientific and Islamic studies and research. At that point, I decided to pick up Arabic and I managed to master it over a short period of time.

- Islam is the best religion that takes into consideration young people's best interest, and offers efficient solutions to the everyday problems they face.

- We, Western youth, are against the romance of religion as well as the current materialistic

conditions of the world. The only way out of this tight corner is through believing in Allah, the One and Only God.

- Western youth have for a long time adamantly rejected believing in Allah to the point that they went downhill, just as Satan did. Very few, like me, were given the opportunity to have faith in Allah the opportunity to contemplate and study, whereupon I managed to work my way out of this crisis through adopting Islam.

French atomic scientists Joan La Pierre, called `Aa'ishah after embracing Islam.

I Have Found In Islam the Remedy to My Dilemma

- If we contemplate the tasks undertaken by people who call to Islam, we realise the enormity of their arduous and strenuous task. They are actually striving in the Cause of Allah.
- Convincing Europeans and trying to make an impact on them is the most difficult challenge callers to Islam face.
- Giving up Christmas is often a problem for Western women. I used to argue with them saying, "You'd rather celebrate once a year than embrace a religion that will bring you bliss and joy every single day of the year. If you are worried about missing a turkey meal, Islam permits you to have it for dinner every night."

British Muslim, Hazel Elizabeth (Her grandfather was a priest, her uncle and cousin monks)

- I got to know Islam through my husband's behavior; he enjoyed, and still does, amazing content and reassurance. I used to compare him to my father who, despite his affluence, was always worried about the future.
- Before we got married, my husband would not get into our house if my father was not at home despite my mother's insistence that he did. He

never called on us unexpectedly and never stayed or talked for long either. He showed his deepest respects for my parents, and treated them as though they were his own.

- I found out by mere coincidence that my husband sends to the Islamic center in Milan, during the month of Ramadan, five hundred meals daily, without mentioning his name.

- Then I bought an interpretation of the meaning of the Glorious Qur'an in Italian and studied it. Next I began to accompany my husband to the Islamic centers every Friday, until Allah guided me to Islam, wherein I found the one thing I have been looking for, the answer to my puzzled questions and the remedy to my psychological crisis.

Italian Muslim Rose Alfino

- Before I met my husband, I was under the illusion that Islam was a religion of extremism, violence and ruthlessness, and one that is quite divorced from civilisation and culture. However, when I met my husband, I saw how tender-hearted, kind and merciful he is. He does not talk much, dedicates all his time to his family and never hesitates to gallantly extend help to others unlike my Italian classmates in college. I was, therefore, introduced to a whole new world.

- Islam commands a son to take care of his parents, a husband to treat his wife well, and a

father to raise his children properly, all of which are long lost values in our materialistic society.

- Whenever I thanked my husband for being so kind to me, he would cite to me verses from the Qur'an commanding a husband to treat his wife kindly.
- After ten years of living with my husband, I decided to embrace Islam wherein I found indisputable protection for women, after I used to be a diehard Christian.

Italian Muslim Marina, Huda after embracing Islam

I Was Nobody before Embracing Islam

- Women in the West rush behind slogans of liberation and so put themselves to a lot of trouble. They have to work and toil hard.
- There must be a difference between a man and a woman.
- One of the best things I liked in Islam was social equality. I have always thought of that before converting to Islam. I was captivated by what the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "*He is not a (true) believer who eats his fill, while leaving his neighbor hungry.*"
- I never agreed with the Christian ideas about Heaven's punishment and reward. It is simply incomprehensible for man to do evil, then to be forgiven by Christ and stand on an equal footing with the good!
- Generally speaking in Sweden, and in Europe, violence, murder, rape, drugs etc. have become so predominant. One does not feel safe walking along the streets of Europe. The penalty for murder in Sweden is six years' imprisonment! A murderer may even be released after only three years on account of good conduct.

- I read in the papers about a horrible murder that took place in Sweden. A drunken husband went home, got into a fight with his wife, smashed her head with some heavy tool shattering it into pieces. Then he ultimately slaughtered her. What kind of a justice system is that which punishes this husband for his hideous crime by sentencing him to a mere six years in prison?!
- We have no choice but to resort to Islam in facing the coming years. We must return to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition). We must be able to fully comprehend our culture and begin to wonder why is it that globalization is unidirectional: from the West towards us? Simply because we are the weaker side!
- After the collapse of the Soviet Union, they are searching for a new enemy to fight.

Swedish Muslim, Ann Sophie Rhold

- For more than twenty years, I knew absolutely nothing about Islam. I joined the mass media department at Temple College, University of Philadelphia. What first caught my attention was the fact that my professors used to deliberately keep from us any information about Islam. They always portrayed it as a 'religion of destruction'. This made me curious to read more about it and to explore its purposes. I found it far loftier and more sublime than how they

maliciously and unjustly describe it. I thereupon embraced Islam

British Lisa Lott Whotman, Huda Ramzi after embracing Islam

- Before embracing Islam I was nobody, So my name before Islam might as well be " Nobody".
- Along the coming years, people who embrace Islam in Britain will equal in number or perhaps even outnumber emigrating Muslims who introduced Islam to Britain. Islam is a universal religion, and so no one can possibly claim that Islam is his alone. Similarly, Islam is also spreading and propagated rapidly in Europe and the United States.

British Rose Kindred

100 Prominent Figures Embrace Islam

- I studied Islam meticulously and at length. I came to the conclusion that honestly and away from any shred of complement, Islam is the religion of truth, justice, peace, security and stability, in the full sense of these words.
- Realising all these positive aspects of Islam, I was certain that it is the one true religion that is solely worth embracing. I, therefore, converted to Islam.
- Islam is the religion of sound human nature, prudence and spiritual content.
- Were man to be left to his sound human nature the way Allah, Exalted be He, created it, away from false systems and creeds that are instilled in him, he would manage to find his way to Islam on his own. More than one hundred prominent figures in the West have lately embraced Islam, including orientalists, men of letters, politicians and scientists.
- Among the prominent figures who embraced Islam are Lord Henry, a descendant of the oldest British family as well as King Saxon who ruled England for thirty eight years in the eighth century and minted a coin with the profession of monotheism and a Qur'anic verse on it.

- In our present time, among people who converted to Islam are English singer Cat Stevens, Spanish composer Antonio Remora, German physician Murad Hoffman, French thinker Roger Garoudi and British Princess Edinique Modowa.
- Islam spreads more among cultured people than others in various communities.
- The percentage of British women who convert to Islam exceeds that of British men.
- British *Times* published a report entitled "Why British Women Embrace Islam" in which it mentioned that Hinduism spreads at a rate of 17 %, Buddhism 63 %, Christianity 47 %, whereas Islam spreads at a highest of 235 %.
- Muslims are expected to constitute one third of the population of France by the twenty first century and to amount to twenty million in the US.
- According to statistics published in *Sunday Times Telegraph*, the number of British Muslims in 1984 was 2.5 times their number in 1974.
- Japanese Muslims are currently estimated to be 50,000 persons.

Japanese Muslim Soli Ora, member of International Book Union in Tokyo and member of the culture club in the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Among her works are *Knowledge, People of the Universe and The Existence of Allah.* She is presently working on a book on Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

I Wore the Veil with Deep Conviction

- Before Allah guided me to Islam, I had been battling in a world of confusion and agony.
- A friend of mind gave me a number of books on Islam. Upon reading them, I felt as if some huge cumbersome burden was lifted off my chest.
- You, Muslims, have no idea how this feels like. I do, because I had to strain in disbelief before I found my way to Islam.
- I cannot begin to describe the happiness, comfort, content and serenity I felt after embracing Islam, praise and thanks be to Allah for all.
- I visited my family in Britain to try to convince them to accept Islam. When they totally rejected, I saw no reason for me to go there again.
- I cannot help but wonder at women who travel all the way to the West, not to call to Islam, but to buy clothes and other luxuries.
- I am truly surprised at many Arab Muslim women I meet who insist on talking to me in English in order to improve their language!
- I like to talk in Arabic, the language of the Qur'an so as to master it and be able to read religious books easily.

- I spend my leisure time memorizing the Glorious Qur'an in the afternoon and revising it in the morning. I also make copies of tapes on Islam to distribute among non-Muslims hoping they may get through to their hearts that are yet sealed.
- The moment I learned that wearing a veil is a must, I obeyed the command with deep conviction. How can I not, if it is ordained by Allah?
- I admire how Muslims stick together. I noticed that if I fall ill, Muslim women constantly check on me, pay me a call and are genuinely ready to help me. Conversely, in my homeland, the land of sham civilisation, you may well die and still no one would ask after you.
- I wish my ten year old Mariam would memorize the Glorious Qur'an in order to call to Islam back home if ever we had to go back there again.

British Um Mariam (Mariam's mother). She embraced Islam ten years ago, and is married to an American Muslim who embraced Islam seven years ago. These were excerpts from an interview published in Saudi magazine, *Ad-Da`wah*.

Women's Societies Are Beginning to Realise the Mistake They Made

- I am currently preparing a study on "How to Change the Way the West Looks at the Muslim Woman".
- I cannot solely blame the West. The misbehavior of some Muslims who misunderstand Islam serves as fuel to the fire of their ferocious attacks on Islam. I, therefore, call on Muslims to abide by Islam in their behavior.
- I feel overjoyed when I am told by people who attend my lectures that their misconceptions about Islam have been corrected.
- I believe that many American women's societies that uphold slogans of liberation are beginning to change a number of their views and are gradually realising the falsity of the mottoes they supported.
- Unfortunately, Muslims lead a Western kind of life that is, in every sense, divorced from the Islamic way of living, as they, for instance, look down on housewives whereas working women are held in high esteem.
- My prime concern is to acquaint people who have recently embraced Islam with its pillars and principles, and to soften their hearts. This is the

prelude to all else. I, therefore, do not focus, for instance, on the necessity of wearing the veil. A woman will automatically wear the veil if she truly wishes to perfect her Islam.

- I am very concerned about the shortage of Islamic centers that teach the principles of Islam and the Arabic language in Sweden. Even the centers already present are doing a very poor job.

Swedish Anna Sophi, Asmaa', after embracing Islam, a university professor and deputy Secretary-General of International Islamic Women's Union.

Defending this Religion Has Become My Primary Goal

- I had previously heard of Islam, though my ideas about it were vague, perhaps even disfigured, until one of my students, a Pakistani Muslim, gave me an invaluable study entitled *The Arab Society Fourteen Centuries Ago*. This young man was intelligent enough not to call the research 'The Islamic Society', but rather opted for 'The Arab Society' so as not to incur the reader's rage and to steer clear of doubts of being biased to his religion.

- The research described an ideal society governed by values and ideals that balanced spiritual needs against physical needs and science against faith, a society that fully had granted man his rights long before they were ever heard of.

- I was curious to discover what the strength of this religion was and how it managed to smoothly spread all over the world the way it did. Therefore, I decided to study it at length, till Islam found its way through to my heart, and all praise and thanks are due to Allah for that.

- Ever since I embraced Islam, I have been keen on spreading it among my kith and kin. It is the duty of every Muslim to strive in the cause of Allah by delivering His message to people still

ignorant of the true image of Islam. This is what I do in America.

- Defending this invaluable religion has become my prime goal so that the whole world would know that Islam is the sole road towards the salvation of the entire humanity.
- It is the only religion that provides solutions to our current social, political and economic problems. It balances the needs of the spirit against those of the body, making sure that neither outweighs the other. Islam is a religion that steers a middle course in life after the disgusting Jewish materialism and the excessive Christian obscurity.
- Islam offered satisfying answers to my philosophical questions that I found to be quite disturbing.
- The change was not easy at the start. Like any American girl, I used to lead a worthless wayward kind of life. Conversely, after embracing Islam, I had to abide by its rules and principles, such as wearing the typical Islamic outfit and performing the five daily prayers on time.
- I have to exert strenuous efforts to memorize verses from the Qur'an to recite in my prayers. I am presently studying the Arabic language as well as comparative *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) at Al-Azhar University. I enjoy suffering tribulation for the sake of Islam, with which I

proudly and courageously faced my family and colleagues. In the past, many Muslims were severely tortured and maltreated, but they held on tight to Islam.

- I do not care much for enemies of Islam. I believe that *Jihad* (striving in the cause of Allah) is what Muslims primarily need at the present time because they are targeted across the world: in Palestine, India, Kashmir, Bosnia and Chechnya, not to mention the plots constantly concocted against them everywhere.
- To Arab Muslims, I say, you lit the way for the entire human race before. So never weaken in facing your enemies, never give way to Zionist Jews and their allies who are out to usurp your holy lands, and remember that ***"Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light, even though the Unbelievers may detest it."***

Pamela Anderson, Hajar after Islam, assistant professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA.

I Now Take Refuge in Prayer and Find Comfort and Peace in Prostrating Myself before Allah

- I had studied existentialism and read books by Sartre and Albert Camus, who were both atheists. This was important for the contrast I drew between faith and atheism.
- I used to go to pray at church, yet I always felt ill at ease, as I could not find satisfying answers to my questions.
- I studied for sometime in France, where I met an Algerian Muslim classmate who was born in France. Though he did not know much about Islam, he spoke proudly and confidently about it describing it as 'the only true religion'.
- I bought a number of books on Islam in addition to an interpretation of the meaning of the Qur'an in French. Since I could not understand it on my own, I headed for the grand mosque in Paris where I met an Algerian Muslim lady engaged in calling to Islam. I was spellbound by her words and speeches, so I started to regularly attend her sermons.
- I came to realise that Islam is the religion of truth which I have always been looking for. I, therefore, embraced Islam in one of the Islamic

centers in France and went back to Japan as a Muslim.

- Ever since I came home from France as a Muslim, I have been holding fast to Islam, keen on preserving my identity, which I have been looking for, for years on end.
- I now take refuge in prayer and find comfort and peace in prostrating myself before Allah, Exalted be He.
- I insisted on wearing the Islamic veil despite the objections of my family and friends, though they did not object to my changing my religion.
- To me the veil was part of my Islamic identity and commitment.
- The best way to get to know Islam, fully understand it and even be able to call to it, is through picking up the Arabic language, which is the key to a real understanding of the Qur'an. I studied Arabic in Cairo.
- There is a lot of wrong information that people read in books and/or newspapers, written out of malice or ignorance. To give an example, I lately read that Muslims do not eat pork because it is sacred to them!
- Some of the people who work or study in Japan come from various Muslim states and are Muslims by name only, because they happen to be born to Muslim parents. Such people do not give a positive impression about Islam.

- Japanese media copies Western media in portraying Islam as a religion of terrorism, poverty and violence.
- Japanese women who converted to Islam exceed Japanese men in number.
- Some of the Muslims who immigrated to Japan in pursuit of a better work opportunity misrepresent the true principles of Islam through their behavior, culture and family ties. They, therefore, are a negative influence on their Japanese wives and on new converts to Islam.

Japanese Muslim Habibah Ka Ouri. She issues a paper entitled *Muslim Shen Bon* and participates with her husband, head of the Japanese Muslims league, in a number of Islamic services and activities inside and outside Japan

I Have Become a Muslim

- One day in 1991, while echoes of "Desert Storm" were sounding throughout the whole world, I walked into a small local library in the state where I lived. Among many books on the strategy of wars and weapons, I came across a small book entitled *Understanding Islam.* So I reached out and picked it up merely out of curiosity.
- After reading the book for a few minutes, my curiosity turned into amazement when I came to realise that Islam provided satisfying answers to questions I could never answer before. I, therefore, did not waste any more time and immediately embraced Islam.
- None of the four books of the new testament, and known to all Christians, viz. St. Mark, Matthew, Luke, then John were released during the lifetime of Jesus, peace be upon him, nor even shortly after his death. The first gospel was written down forty years after Jesus' ascension, that is in the year 70 AC. Next appeared the gospel according to St. Matthew, then St. Luke and finally St. John, around the year 100 AC.
- I handed one of the missionaries a preliminary version of the alterations I discovered in the Bible, and shortly afterwards, he came to meet me. Instead of refuting my arguments, he accused me of attacking the Holy Book.

- I got a copy of the Holy Book entitled *The New International Translation of the Holy Book from the Jehovah's Witnesses*. I asked a high-ranking member in a local church how he could explain a particular verse in the Gospel according to St. Matthew which arouses one's curiosity when it appears as such (31...) with no words at all. Just number 31 followed by a big space?! The moment he verified my words, signs of perplexity swept over his face and he promised to answer my question later; I am still waiting for his reply!
- Take a close look at the indisputable monotheism in the Gospel according to St. John (17:3) *(And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.)* How can we reconcile this: that is monotheism and the Trinity?
- When the Christians realised that their crusades proved a total failure, they adopted an entirely different method. They began to pretend that they wish to get closer to Muslims in an amiable friendly way. The real motives of Christianity are now sugarcoated!
- The clerical center for Muslims in America issues a magazine entitled *The Light of the Truth*, published both in English and Arabic. It quotes Islamic expressions and Qur'anic verses. What we are concerned with here is the sly tactics they employ, as these expressions are misinterpreted

and explained out of context, with a view to giving the impression that they go in line with the teachings of Christianity.

- To all Muslims, I say, Do not forget what Allah, Exalted be He, said, ***"Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion."*** (Al-Baqarah:130)

- The further Islam spreads and is propagated, the more ferocious these attacks will get. Muslims should no longer stand still and turn a deaf ear to all that. They must be prepared; they must have strong steadfast faith, and they must know all about their opponents so as to be able to vie with them.

Barbara Brown, an American writer

Indescribable Joy

- We both used to work in one firm. He managed to attract my attention, as he was different from all other young men. He was well-behaved, broad-minded, cultured and self-confident.
- However, what mainly caught my attention were his firm faith, his taking pride in Islam, and his commitment to the obligations of his religion. He used to get up and pray in front of us all heedless of all our whispers.
- I realised that Islam is the true religion and the perfect legislation and that it was sent by the One and Only God (Allah) since it can never be man-made. I therefore believed in Allah, Glorified be He, His revered Prophet and His Glorious Book, which, given its wording, style, information and knowledge, is a miracle in itself.
- After I embraced Islam, I began to lead the life of a recluse. I used to spend most of my leisure time alone in my room contemplating the grandeur of the Creator, whispering to Him, asking Him for forgiveness and aid. I made a pledge to Allah, Exalted be He, to bring about a total change in my life. I feel now like a newborn who is basking in the sun of Islam that is shining brightly down on me filling my heart with content and reassurance.

- My family began to notice the change. They started to shower me with questions: Why the solitude, Mary? Why refuse to go to church when you used to insist that we did, Mary? Why don't you accompany us to dancing parties, Mary? Mary... Mary... Mary... Why? Why? Why? It was not easy to answer their questions all at one time.

- A short while after I converted to Islam, my colleague Ahmad proposed to me. He told me that he waited for some time until he was positive that I was firm in my belief. He asked me if I would marry him. How can I not accept to marry him when it was he who helped me come out of the dark and into the light? How can I not accept to marry him when I desperately needed his help to hold on to the religion of the truth?

- I felt indescribable joy, and I thanked Allah for guiding me to Islam.

- The main problem I faced was how to break the news to my family, given the fact that they were devoted Christians. I prayed to Allah to grant me the strength to be able to do the job.

- When I gave the news to my family, I was deafened by their screams: What? You will marry a Muslim? My mother yelled out in my face: You must be out of your mind! My father threatened me: Don't you ever dare, or I swear I will kill you... I will kill. As for my grandmother, she

started going to church daily praying that I would be guided back to the right track!!

- My sisters felt sorry for me, as they thought I was deprived of all the pleasures of life; I do not stay out late, I do not dance, I do not drink!!
- I knew that by embracing Islam and marrying Ahmad, I stood to lose my family that I loved. But my love of Allah and my desire to please Him were more important to me.
- I prayed to Allah to guide my family to the right path and to help me persuade them to embrace Islam so as to salvage them from Allah's Punishment in the Hereafter.

Lebanese Mary, written by Rola Al-`Abd in *Ganni Ash-Shaqa'iq* magazine.

Lying On My bed, I Cried Out, Oh God!

- I used to do whatever I felt like doing... I wrote a lot, produced a lot, made a lot of money, almost toured the globe... However, I could not help but feel that something was missing.
- What is the point of life when one is chased by worries all the time? How can one enjoy life while being soaked in misery? I was a prey to worries, illusions and psychological problems, although I used to pretend to be happy and at ease.
- Despite the material luxury that our civilisation offers us, it is unable to provide us with even the least amount of reassurance and content.
- Do not be taken in by aspects of progress and civilisation that we, in the West, enjoy. Our civilisation is more like a cobweb that wins people's admiration because of its outside glamor, though in fact it is a mere fragile cobweb that can easily be blown away in the wind.
- Every night when I went to bed, I was kept awake by one question: Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? One winter night, lying on my bed, I cried out, Oh God! If you are there, show me the truth. A group of American young men rented part of my house. I began to observe

them after they turned out to be extremely well-behaved.

- I saw them once at dawn performing the ablution then praying in congregation. I could not rest until I asked them, right after they finished their prayer, what they were doing. They explained to me what ablution and prayer were about, in addition to some other concepts of Islam. Their words set my heart at ease.
- My suspicion started turning into certitude, my fear into reassurance and my worry into comfort. I experienced some indescribable feeling.
- I embraced Islam the moment I listened to the explanation of the American Muslims, then I hurried to perform the ablution and I offered prayer.
- I cried my eyes out, then I fell asleep feeling as if I had just been given a new lease of life.
- A year later, I headed for Saudi Arabia to perform the minor pilgrimage. At that time, I started to work on my book, *An Eternal Lover... A European Woman Spellbound By Islam*. I finished it back in Vienna where it was published in German in 1995.
- Humanity is going to witness an enormous upheaval during the second decade of the coming century. Muslims will be back at the helm of the world. Things will go back to the way they used

to be the day Gabriel, peace be upon him, delivered Allah's Message to Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Austrian writer, Iman Dox, interviewed by Rashida Toball, published in *Al Manar* Kuwaiti magazine

I Was Captivated by the Direct Relationship between Man and Allah

- I embraced Islam in the grand mosque in London, before British Yusuf Islaam, who now calls to Islam.
- I used to lead a luxurious life in London, and I had only heard about Islam as a religion that forbids eating pork and that Muslims have to pray a lot.
- Before converting to Islam, I was keen on finding out how women are treated in Islam. I ascertained, beyond any shadow of doubt, that women in Islam are honored and given much attention in such a way that they had never enjoyed under any religion or law. This was among the prime reasons behind my converting to Islam.
- According to Islam, a woman is no longer a commodity on the market.
- Some people falsely and absurdly claim that the veil deprives a woman of both her beauty and her liberty. I look far more beautiful now that I have worn the veil. It shields me against men's devouring eyes.

Catherine, Huda after Islam

- I read a lecture that had been delivered by Muslim German Baron `Umar Ehrenfels who was particularly interested in the historical and cultural problems connected with the status of women in Islam. This lecture had a deep impact on me, as I realised that some of the habits that I saw few Muslims engaged in, had nothing to do with Islam.

- I learned that a Muslim woman enjoys a distinguished status in Islam, and that she has been granted rights which Christian or Jewish women never dreamed of getting.

- I was captivated by the direct relation between man and Allah, away from any meddling on the part of the clergy.

- The teachings of Islam addressed my mind and my sound human nature. Its realism as well as idealism managed to attract every person with a sound mind and unimpaired human nature.

- Whenever I was asked about the secret behind my embracing Islam, I cited the Qur'anic verse, ***"Those whom Allah (in His Plan) willeth to guide - He openeth their breast to Islam"***. (Al-An`aam: 125) I also added, you must study Islam so as to be able to sense its penetrating light and to learn all about its details.

- Muslims, at present, weak as they are, can set quite an example through their behavior and

work, and can therefore deliver the true message of Islam to countless tortured human souls thirsty for the truth.

- Meanings of the Glorious Qur'an should be translated into more and more languages, provided that this should be undertaken by scholars of Islam who master the target languages that the Qur'an is to be translated into.
- Islam, with all its sublime values, is capable of spreading all around the globe so as to fulfil the physical and spiritual needs of the entire human race.

Monica Tezfescon, Faṯimah, after embracing Islam

The Western Woman Does Not Know What She Wants

- I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. (She broke in tears as she pronounced the profession of faith. Scholars of Islam gathered around her trying to calm her, as she was overjoyed announcing her embracing Islam.)
- From now on, my name will be Fatimah, after the daughter of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.
- I used to lead a life of worry, with no ambitions, no goals, no values, no examples to follow.
- I happened to find a book on Islam, and I read it. The book dealt with the Islamic creed, mosques, prayer and the Glorious Qur'an. I, therefore, began to search for the Qur'an.
- I felt like I have found my whole life the moment I found the Qur'an.
- I was so absorbed in the interpretation of the meaning of the Glorious Qur'an. I would ask my Muslim friends about things I could not understand.
- The more I read about Islam, the more I came to sense its grandeur.

- What mainly attracted me to Islam were the tolerance Muslims always readily displayed, Islam's call for equality among people as well as its call for virtue and morality.
- When I pronounced the profession of faith, I could not hold my tears back. I felt those tears wash away all my past sins which is true, as "embracing Islam atones for one's previous sins committed before being a Muslim".
- I read a lot about Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his daughter Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her. I, therefore, wished to name myself Fatimah out of my love for her and in order to sense the honor of my namesake and try to copy her manners.
- Islam brought a kind of joy into my life that no words could possibly do justice.
- Among the prime reasons behind my converting to Islam is the fact that it appreciates the role of woman in society as well as the fact that Muslims revere places of worship and that they display fear of Allah as they stand before Him in prayer.
- I dream of spending the rest of my life among my new Muslim family in Egypt.
- The Western woman leads a life that lacks any purpose; she simply does not know what it is that she wants. She is extremely miserable and

is constantly humiliated despite her dignified look. It is bad enough that she is easy prey for human wolves. The Western woman is not fit to be a good mother, nor is she capable of forming a family because she is too occupied with other trivialities which, to her, are of the utmost importance.

- I used to watch Western women feeling as if I did not belong to that society. I quit my job to take care of my child. However, it was Allah's Will that my child had to die. I deeply mourned his death, yet I realised that it was the Will of Allah, the Omnipotent.

Barbara Marrows, Fatimah after embracing Islam, interviewed by *The Islamic World* newspaper, issued by the Muslim World League.

Islam Is Against Extravagance

- I realised that some of the people who call to Islam depend on rather old methods, which, though still needed and still efficient, are hardly fruitful in Western societies, specifically.
- The West attacks everything they know about and everything that is related to Islam.
- In America, some people claim that the Qur'an is a book that preaches terrorism. In Germany, cheap popular papers gather information about terrorism, crimes and foreigners. They make unfounded accusations to blame Muslims for whatever crimes that take place. Arabs and Muslims are deliberately made to appear implicated even when they are proved to be innocent.
- Veiled women attract the attention of enemies of Islam. They regard the veil as a sign of backwardness, a symbol of man's dominance over woman.
- Westerners claim that Muslims do not bathe or wash their hair.
- Astonishingly, some Germans walk down the streets stark-naked, with no clothes on at all. Nonetheless, when they see a veiled Muslim girl or woman, they are enraged and demand that wearing the veil be banned, as if liberty and

democracy only approve of nudity and lewdness, but not of virtue or of wearing the veil!

- Many seminars and conferences on Islam are often held in the West, where Islam is objectively tackled in such a way that does appeal to Westerners. However, given what they see in some of the Muslim states, they cannot help but draw a contrast between the reality they witness firsthand and what Islam calls for. They are therefore left with lots of contradictions, which ultimately drive them further away from Islam.
- It is not easy to start a dialog between Islam and the West. This would require ceaseless efforts to bring closer different viewpoints. An Islamic conference that was to be held in Germany was called off because Iranian foreign minister, who was invited to attend the conference, commented right after Rabin was assassinated saying, "He deserves to die." German Parliament thereupon objected to Iran's participation in the conference. The government, placed in an awkward position as such, decided to call off the conference altogether.
- The West is the world's worst environment polluter. Likewise, the former Soviet Union played an integral role in polluting the environment. After the collapse of communism and the reunification of Germany, huge amounts of pollutants were found to have been buried in East Germany.

- According to Islam, man is Allah's vicegerent on earth, but not its owner.
- The Western man has employed all methods to control nature. Genetic engineering is the worst of all methods that man has ever resorted to.
- According to Islam, unlimited materialism that is not governed by moral values lead to the extinction and definitely the abuse of natural resources.
- Noise produced by cars, equipment, cassettes, television sets, VCRs and music has resulted in noise pollution.
- Islam is against extravagance and exaggeration in permissible lawful matters, let alone forbidden unlawful things.

German Muslim Alice Koglar, who converted to Islam at the age of 18 and got an MA degree at Frankfurt University.

I Cried upon Learning of the Oneness of Allah

- My uncle who was a clergyman and my aunt who was a nun both instilled in me the teachings of Christianity.
- When I came of age, I got absorbed in the American wayward kind of life. I no longer had time for church, which I only went to, on religious occasions.
- Chasing after the latest fashion trends, going to parties and frequenting clubs became the center of my life.
- Catholicism never told me why I came to this world, nor what I should do to be an ideal human being.
- I used to adhere to the false claims that Islam treats women unjustly and that the Western woman is far more liberated than a Muslim woman could ever be.
- I was surprised to learn that there is only one god. In America, it is commonly held that God is the Trinity made up of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- When I learned of the oneness of Allah, I was so moved to the point that I kept crying not knowing why.

- I unconsciously began to search for some hitherto obscure fact. I got acquainted with Muslim male and female students in college. I read an interpretation of the meaning of the Glorious Qur'an in English. I thereupon converted to Islam without being pressured by anyone at all.

- Two weeks later, I wore the veil. A group of Muslim women in Boston celebrated the occasion.

- They started to explain to me the rationale of wearing the veil, pointing out that it is an obligation so that women would be protected against men's eyes and so that men would not be charmed by our beauty.

- It has been nine years now since I embraced Islam. During those years, I have read a number of books on Islam that were translated into English, the first of which was the Glorious Qur'an.

- I have also watched some television shows, produced by a Canadian television station, and presented by a young man called Jamal Badawi. He is brilliant in introducing Islam to non-Muslims, and excels in answering Western Muslims' questions.

- I read booklets written by South African Ahmad Deedat in which he draws a contrast between Christianity and Islam and between the Bible and the Qur'an.

- Like most Americans, I was mainly and primarily interested in logical evidence based on scientific explanations in all religious debates.
- I strove to marry a Muslim man after I learned that he would treat me well and be fair to me, and, as it turned out, I was not disappointed.
- Some Muslim men do not treat their wives the way Islam would have them do.
- When I went to Arab countries, I was surprised to find that large numbers of men and women have cast Islam behind their backs. Some are totally ignorant about their religion.
- I call on Muslim women to abandon all worldly lusts shipped to them from the West and to go back to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.
- Muslim women are fully aware of the fact that wearing the veil is an obligation. However, they put it off indefinitely because they are lured by worldly desires.

American Merisa Power, Iman Badran, after embracing Islam

I Woke up Feeling Peaceful and Serene

- I was actually curious to find out everything. I began to ask questions about what Islam is and who Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is. Muslims used to answer my questions simply and spontaneously, which was so unlike Christians. I therefore set out to find the truth.
- At first, I was taken aback at their saying that Jesus Christ is not God's son. I thus grew suspicious and kept asking more and more questions. I was bitterly torn apart that I could not even sleep at night. I used to spend time alone in my room recalling and contemplating all I have heard.
- I finally came to the following conclusion: if Christ is the son of God, this means God must have a wife. Since Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, does this mean she is God's wife?!!
- As for their claiming that Jesus is God, how could he stay inside a woman's womb for nine months? Who was in charge of the universe during that period? Who used to bring people to life and take others lives? I was therefore convinced that Christ, peace be upon him, is a human being selected by Allah to deliver His

message. He is, therefore, a Messenger and a Prophet of Allah.

- They also claim that Jesus, peace be upon him, was crucified to redeem humanity from Adam and Eve's sin. Yet I wondered how Allah can hold man accountable for a sin that someone else committed?!!
- They also maintain that Jesus, peace be upon him, was crucified to save us. Why would he do that? Allah punished Adam and Eve by driving them out of Paradise. So what redemption do they mean? What would he be saving us from? I could not think of an answer.
- I began to grow afraid. My head abounded in endless questions. I had no idea what to do. My mind was paralyzed and I felt so confused, until one night I prayed to God to guide me to the right path and to lead me to whatever would please Him. That night, I dreamed that I was trying to escape from a group of people who wanted to kill me on the beach. I had to overcome two obstacles I came across, then I threw myself in the sea while holding on to the third obstacle. I was motionless as I was terrified I might drown. Suddenly, I felt a boy behind me trying to drown me. Positive that I was going to die, I asked two children who were with me to read the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an (*Al-Faatihah*) after I had read the *Tashah-hud*

(testification of faith at the middle or end of the prayer). Suddenly the boy took me by the hand to the shore after he was trying to drown me. The next thing I knew he vanished. I woke up feeling peaceful and serene. I thus realised right away that Allah wished me to embrace Islam, and so I did.

- I had another dream in which my family and I walked into a spacious hall where I began to call for prayer at the top of my voice. At this point, I realised that Allah wanted me to break the news of my embracing Islam to my family fearlessly.
- I am now proud to testify that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's messenger.

Mona Sa'ad Aslaan, interviewed by *Gani Ash-Shaq'iq* magazine

The Western Woman Is Not Really Liberated As the Muslim Woman Thinks She Is

- The Western woman suffers in life. She is expected to be a good woman, a good mother and a good employee.
- We have numerous schools for liberating women, each of which upholds a different slogan, leaving women torn apart among them all.
- When the Western woman reads the Qur'an and learns about the rights that Islam grants women, she realises that a Muslim woman had been given her full rights thousands of years before women's liberation movements ever began.
- The Qur'an teaches us the true meaning of the liberation of women. It also answers such questions as, how can a woman be responsible for her parents and even for herself ?
- The women's liberation movements have become a source of worry and apprehension to women.
- The Western woman is actually held in chains as she is forced to join a particular system governed by men, if she is to succeed. She is expected to be more of a man than a woman, if she is to thrive in the society. What kind of liberty is this?!

- Forcing women to go out to work was at the expense of her motherhood, which is basically detrimental to the concept of motherhood in itself. As a result, children were raised up on the streets, and turned into gangsters and thugs. This is an additional source of worry for women. This also causes them to feel guilty.

- The Western woman is further manacled by a certain image of the perfect woman, as sketched by society as well as the media, an image that is quite remote from that of the ordinary woman in society. This is another reason for her to be troubled as she strives to rise up to the level of attractive women in the commercials. Only she cannot!

- I would like to warn Muslim women against women's libbers in the West. Before I converted to Islam, I used to be a libber myself and I am fully aware of the true sense of the word. I wish Muslim women would realise that Western women are not as liberated as they think they are. They are shackled by the fetters of the Western system. Islam, conversely, has granted women the true freedom that they have always been searching for.

- The problem of women's libbers in Arab states is not just that they are ignorant of the truth about women's libbers in the West, but that they are ignorant of the truth about Islam as well.

- American media is far more objective than Muslims think it is. However, the problem of Muslims in the West is that they do not know how to introduce Islam properly, nor do they know how to deal with the media. Another problem is that Muslims differ among themselves as to the statements they make and the views that they express on television, for instance; this tends to confuse the American audience.

- The problem is very often with Muslims, and not with the American media.

- Many Muslims in the West present a true image of Islam, and not of the habits of their own countries.

- Islam is spreading rapidly because many Muslim intellectuals in the West improve the ways they employ in addressing and appealing to the Western intelligentsia. There is a misconception that people who embrace Islam are always among the poor lower classes, or are people who suffer from certain problems. However, this is untrue. The majority of people who convert to Islam are university graduates.

An American lady who converted to Islam in 1977 and called herself Ameenah As-Salmy. She is a TV director and she was interviewed by Hishaam Al-`Awadi.

I Felt an Extraordinary Power Run Through My Veins the Moment I Pronounced the Testification of Faith

- My husband died in a car crash and so I became a widow overnight.
- I knew I would have to suffer after the demise of my husband because of the way the Hindus, among whom I lived, looked at a widow. They have the widow cut her hair, and force her to dress in either black or white for the rest of her life. She is deprived of wearing jewelry or of getting married ever again.
- My money ran out and I ran into debts. I could not afford to pay the house rent. My life turned into a frightful nightmare. I was scared of life, of the dark future awaiting me, and of practically everything.
- I got to know a Russian lady who was married to a Muslim. She talked to me about Islam, as she had converted to Islam herself, and I used to watch her pray. I liked her prayer as it brought me a sense of ease I have never experienced before.
- The neighborhood where I lived was mostly inhabited by Muslims. I began to watch them

pray and I even started to imitate them at home, which gave me a great joy.

- One night I had a dream which was the reason behind my embracing Islam. I saw a host of people rushing behind me trying to strangle me. I felt terrified. I kept running as fast as I could to the point that I felt my heart was about to stop beating. I finally reached a place I have never been to before. It was a gorgeous spacious place with lanterns hanging all around beaming with green light wherein one finds comfort and tranquility.
- I was relieved and in every sense reassured immediately upon arriving at that place where I met a group of people who warmly welcomed me. They patted my shoulder and tried to calm me saying, "Don't worry, all your problems will be solved."
- Fear and anxiety were soon dispersed and replaced by a sense of reassurance and peace of mind.
- I recounted my dream to some pious people who told me that that was an explicit invitation for me to embrace Islam being the only shelter that would offer me security and safety.
- As I pronounced *Shahadah*[1], I felt an extraordinary power run through my veins, a kind of

[1] The Islamic profession of the oneness of Allah and of the prophecy of Prophet Muhammad. (Trans.)

power I have never experienced before that managed to free me from any fear of poverty or of the future.

- I am now indescribably happy. I enjoy a kind of bliss that I have been deprived of all my past life and that can only be surpassed by the joy and felicity one is likely to sense in the Hereafter.
- The more I learn about Islam, the happier I become. The more well-versed I get in Islam, the more blissful I feel.

A woman who found her way to Islam through The Commission for Introducing Islam in Kuwait

It Breaks My Heart How Muslims Are Ignorant of Islam

- Though I used to think that the world revolved around myself, I came to learn that the family is the basic pillar in society and that both a man and a woman need one another as the two of them complement each other rather than act as rivals.
- Some people believe that the Qur'an is an obstacle that hinders women. It was actually the British occupation of some Muslims states that gave rise to this false notion.
- I was introduced to Islam during my attempts to have Muslims convert to Christianity.
- I bought the Glorious Qur'an with the intention of using it against Muslims. I studied it for two years hoping to find at least a slight mistake in it.
- One day, a group of Arab Muslims came knocking on my door. One of them told me, "We heard that you wish to embrace Islam." Taken aback and amazed, I replied, "Surely not. I'm a devout Christian."
- I started arguing with him hoping that I could convince him of the falsity of Islam. Then I started listening to him, when he spoke about

some aspects of Islam which I had thought were negative. However, `Abdel `Azeez Ash-Sheikh (and never will I forget this name as long as I live) explained to me at length the beauty of Islam. He displayed admirable patience in introducing Islam to me.

- I believe that at that point I had undergone some change, because I had already read the Qur'an. For instance, I had stopped drinking alcohol and eating pork.
- The best way to call Western non-Muslims to Islam is to be ourselves perfect examples of implementing the teachings of Islam and to have sufficient knowledge in order to be able to answer their clever questions.
- Most Muslims are ignorant of their religion, which breaks my heart.
- We should avoid criticising and attacking Westerners in order to inform them of the teachings of Islam.
- I refused to attend the women's conference that was held in Beijing and chose to boycott it, though I had received several invitations to participate in it.
- The reason why I decided not to attend the conference was because they refused right from the beginning to listen to the Islamic viewpoint. I had previously met most of the women

organising the conference since I know them well and I know that most of them are lesbians.

- I realised that if I go to the conference, I would be rendering it legitimacy. Unfortunately, some Muslim women were proud to attend the conference being under the illusion that they were on the road towards liberation. This certainly stemmed from their admiration for the secular calls for women's liberation as well as their ignorance of Islam.

- Before converting to Islam, I was a women's libber myself. I used to think that men and women were rivals and that it was my job to be just as harsh and tough as men in order to be able to compete with them. Whatever a man could do, I could do too, and if he outdid me, I thought of him as an enemy.

- After embracing Islam, I was allowed to be proud of being a woman and a mother. I can also now admit that men are different from women.

An American lady who converted to Islam in 1977 and called herself Ameenah As-Salmy. She is a TV director and she was interviewed by Hishaam Al-`Awadi.

I Realised that Jesus Is a Prophet

- For more than twenty years, I was completely in the dark about Islam.
- After joining the mass media department, Temple University, Philadelphia, the first thing that caught my attention was the fact that my professors deliberately kept us in the dark concerning any information on Islam.
- They used to describe Islam very briefly as a religion of destruction.
- I eagerly started to read about Islam and search for its goals. I was surprised to find it is far greater and more sublime than the way they chose to describe it. I therefore did not hesitate for a second to embrace Islam.
- My father works as a priest in a church in New England where I was born. He always wished that I would be a missionary. However, Allah, Exalted be He, so willed it that I should do what is even better.
- I did a number of additional courses in political sciences and strategies of the Middle East. These additional courses, as it later turned out, were to bring me much joy for it was through them that I got to learn much about Arab Muslim states.

- I wondered at the deliberate shortage of information on Islam which represents a basic dimension and a principal factor in forming the social and political life as well as the history of this region for the past 1400 years.
- I asked myself why they would deliberately choose to disregard Islam and alienate students from the true concepts of this religion.
- As a matter of fact, they regard Islam as a serious threat to Western concepts in general, as well as to Christian youth and their mentality in particular.
- Despite my parents' objection, I started reading whatever books on Islam that I could lay my hands on, till I felt the principles of this sublime religion take control of my heart and mind.
- I learned about the oneness of Allah, and I realised, beyond any trace of doubt, that Jesus is only a human Prophet just like Moses, Abraham and Muhammad, peace be upon them, are. I also learned that alcohol, adultery and gambling are unlawful which stands in striking contrast to the looseness of sexual relations, alcoholism, addiction, gambling, violence as well as all other aspects of evil and lawlessness quite known to everybody who lives in Europe and the United States.
- I studied Islamic rituals such as prayer, fasting, Zakah (Obligatory Charity) and pilgrimage, for those who can afford it.

- Enemies of Islam spare no efforts to keep people from learning about it. They are aware that if they mention Islam and all the virtues and good manners it calls for as well as the fact that it elevates humanity and fosters good relations among people, Islam is bound to take full control of people's hearts since it is the religion of truth.

American Layla Ramzi, Laylott Whotman before embracing Islam

I Found Safety Solely in Islam

- My life was meaningless before converting to Islam.
- Shyness is regarded in the West as backwardness, a psychological disease or a complex!
- I had never previously heard anything about Islam. I had no idea what it was or who its followers were.
- I read a booklet about the rights of the Muslim woman. To my surprise, I discovered how much we Western women suffer under laws that enslave and hold women in contempt, unlike the good life that Islam grants a woman.
- Islam protects women, commands a man to take good care of her, treat her well, sustain her and even punishes him for denying her any of her rights.
- As for the issue of beating (i.e. beating the wife), there are conditions and restraints that Islam imposes. Besides, beating stands as the final resort, before which a husband is to try advice, abandonment and finally beating that does not induce pain. Conversely, a Western husband is very likely to beat his wife to death who, most of the time, is made to go through intolerable torment when he comes home drunk or with one

of his mistresses only to transfer to her disease as well as cause her psychological problems.

- I said to myself, "Why can I not have these rights in return for a number of duties which I can fulfil and which will not impair my femininity or dignity?"

- I wondered, "Why should I debase myself and accept to be looked at merely as a pretty creature, the sole purpose of whom is cheap pleasure and humiliation? Why can I not be a respectable woman before myself and before people? Why can I not be a Muslim?"

- I started frequenting the Islamic Center where I got to learn more about Islam. I grew fully convinced of it until one day, amid tears of joy that were seen in the eyes of all Muslim women around me, I pronounced the testification of faith, " I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Then they started congratulating me and prayed that I would be a steadfast devout Muslim.

- My friends were soon to embrace Islam, so did a young man who later married me and we had a pretty child whom we named Khadeejah.

- All praise and thanks are due to Allah, now that I am a Muslim woman, I enjoy my full rights under Islam which ensures that I lead a good honorable life.

- I have managed to memorize seven sections of the Glorious Qur'an so far.
- I am currently preparing special shows for children, which aim at spreading Islam among them with a view to protecting them against destructive ideas.
- I ask every Muslim who is keen on defending and spreading Islam to start an Islamic satellite channel in English, being the most widespread language.
- It was in Islam that I found safety and altruism. People who have not come to enjoy the pleasure of embracing Islam that lights the hearts actually miss out on a lot.
- Islam means real happiness.

American Muslim Faṯimah Yusuf

I Discovered Treasures
I Was Never Aware of before

- I do not recall ever going to church before converting to Islam, not even once!
- Materialism and egoism have been predominant in my family. That is why I have always missed family warmth since my childhood.
- I went to American schools which pay little attention to religion, whereas children learn about sex and moving out of their families' houses by the time they become teenagers.
- I have always loved children because I missed parental kindness. Despite the fact that I was their only daughter, my parents were constantly extremely occupied with their work. As a result, they left me alone with the maid who was cruel to me. I joined the University of California and majored in children educational studies and methods of preserving their psychological health. I conducted field studies on homeless children deprived of family warmth, just as I was in my childhood.
- More than 90 percent of children in the United States and the West in general are deprived of full parental care, which cause them to grow into worried and psychologically unbalanced people.

- Children institutions, be they nurseries or orphanages, raise more than 80 percent of American children away from secure family environment either because the parents are too busy to take care of their own children or because they are divorced.
- The rate of juvenile crime is on the rise despite advanced technology and economic luxury.
- Instilling egoism in children and the desire to get what one wants by any means and heedless of others have reinforced materialism and tightened its grip on aspects of Western life.
- I led a wayward kind of life like any Western girl that searches for a boyfriend, but I could never bring myself to accept this practice that goes against human dignity, being a mere animalistic relationship.
- After some time, I insisted on getting married and I got three children. Yet, my husband deserted me suddenly and for no obvious reason except to start a relationship with a younger girl. I stayed with my children and together we strove to face the hardships of life. He never bothered to ask how I was holding on. Worse still, he used to cause me trouble absolutely heedless of the years we spent together and the children that we had.
- In the early nineties, I got acquainted with an Egyptian engineer who was living in the United

States. He stood by me, helped me and offered me honest advice regarding many of the problems I faced. When I asked him he was doing that, he said he was only abiding by the dictates of his religion which commands him to love people and help them. When I asked what his religion is, he said it is Islam which is so unjustly disfigured by our media. I asked him to introduce me to this religion. He therefore got me a number of simplified books on Islam including an interpretation of the meanings of the Qur'an, the Prophetic Sayings (*Hadiths*), the biography of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and the history of Islam.

- I discovered treasures I was totally ignorant of. Every time I learned something new, I grew increasingly eager to learn further about Islam. When I felt positive that it was the religion of truth, I expressed to the Egyptian engineer my desire to convert to Islam.

- After embracing Islam, I asked the Egyptian engineer if he would marry me and he agreed. We got married and lived in Cairo after the UNICEF agreed that I work in Egypt.

Pamela Michelle, UN expert at the UNICEF in the Middle East, Asmaa' after embracing Islam

I Had Some Strange Feeling

- Ever since my childhood, I have always felt afraid and insecure.
- Sitting alone at home, and after long hard thinking, I was convinced that there is an Almighty God and that we will surely be held accountable to our deeds and so therefore we should live a life that is governed by ethical values.
- All my life I have been searching for the true religion. I used to go to both the Catholic and the Protestant churches with my own free will. I actually followed neither of them. However, the reason why I frequented these two churches was to study their principles and teachings. I later considered joining the Protestant church.
- I used to read lots of books because reading offered me the greatest pleasure.
- Whenever I read about the Islamic principles and acts of worship, I was always tremendously influenced by them. I finally asked my family to get me an interpretation of the Qur'an and the biography of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.
- On Christmas Eve, 1962, I got an interpretation of the meanings of the Qur'an and the Prophetic

Sayings (*Hadiths*) as a Christmas gift from my family. I sat down and eagerly started reading for two whole hours. At around midnight, I had a strange feeling and a voice within me told me that Christianity was not right for me and that I must embrace Islam as it is the religion of truth that goes in line with one's mind and sound human nature.

- My family could not believe me. They thought I was merely going through some romantic phase just like most other young people often do.

- I kept reading more about Islam. Yet, unfortunately, most of the books I managed to get were written by orientalists and which therefore often included wrong information about Islam and Muslims.

- Among the wrong information I read in those books was the fact that women's veil was abolished in Muslim countries.

- In the years following my embracing Islam, I hardly met any devout Muslims in order to ask them about Islam.

- In 1968, I got a chance to go to London. I visited the Islamic Center where I publicly declared my embracing Islam and managed to get a few books on Islamic rituals, jurisprudence, precepts as well as other aspects of religion.

- I received an invitation from the University of Al-Azhar in Egypt to study the Glorious Qur'an and the Arabic language. I therefore traveled to Egypt and pursued my studies in the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Girl's Branch in Madinat City, Cairo. I attended classes in Arabic which helped me to read the Glorious Qur'an and books on Islam.
- Eleven months later, I went back home and joined the Oriental Studies Institute. Most of my professors were German orientalists who made no secrets of the grudge they held against Islam. Therefore, I had to keep my faith a secret in order to be able to finish my studies, and I eventually managed to get an MA degree.
- Among the students at the Institute was an Egyptian young man who was getting his Ph.D. We met and then eventually got married. I later called myself Kareemah instead of Alexandra.
- After my husband got his Ph.D., he went back home to Egypt and the two of us lived in a Muslim country where I had no problem declaring my faith.
- After I had my first child, I felt that my decision to settle down in Egypt was right.
- In 1989, I performed the minor pilgrimage (*'Umrah*) and in 1990, I performed the pilgrimage (*Hajj*).

- All praise and thanks are due to Allah for having mercy on me by guiding me to Islam.

German Alexandra Brown, Kareemah after converting to Islam, her story was published by the Saudi Ad-*Da`wah'* magazine